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The Issue of the November Election.

AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG MEN:

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OHIO STATE LIBRARIAN.

Turner



Delivered before the Wide-Awakes of Tiffin, Ohio, Oct. 18, 1860.

A LARGE number of young men, in all of our Northern States will, on the 6th day of November, 1860, for the first time cast their ballots for President and Vice-President of the United States, thus exercising the highest responsibility of a citizen enjoying the choicest privilege of a freeman, and discharging the most important duty of a voter.

They are the men whom I would this evening address.

To vote is a duty which no good citizen will willingly fail to discharge, whether there may be a majority of five or of fifty thousand for, or against his ballot; and every good citizen will understand thoroughly the effect of the vote which he casts.

I stand here to endeavor to show the men whose political careers lie in the future, what is the pivotal issue of this campaign, and to invite them to cast the ballots they control, for the principles best calculated to restore to our Federal Government the justness and faithfulness which characterized it in the early days of the Republic, and best calculated to secure the highest good to the greatest number of the American people.

I need not attempt to discuss collateral questions. My purpose does not require me to unfold the history of the origin and extension of slavery in America. I am not called upon to discuss questions pertaining to revenues, nor to present statistics for internal improvements.

Relying upon a dispassionate and trustworthy statement of facts and doctrines which current history substantiates, I speak from the present for the future. I hope, not from mere party bias—I know, not from partisan prejudice. I rely on principles and their practical application.

Adherence to justly grounded and well defined principles, is the vital safeguard of permanent prosperity, alike, for the individual, for the community, and for the state; and such adherence is none the less essential for a political than it is for any other organization.

The lessons of history are clear on this proposition. Those lessons are found not always in events significant when they transpired, but often in what were regarded as minor affairs.

Antiquarians have traced, in fragments of the most fragile of the productions of man's handiwork, long buried in shifting sands, not only important facts illustrating the domestic characteristics of non-existing nations, but facts which threw light upon the causes of their decline and fall.

Doctrines and practices adopted and exercised by working politicians, for temporary gain, in secret places, unheeded as soon as they are employed, are competent to teach the philosophic inquirer why the administration of a republican government is distinguished for partisan favoritism and for extravagant peculation; why the prominent features of State and National Nominating Conventions are profanity and pugilism, disorder and deception, provoking honest delegates, in bitterness of heart, to exclaim, "What a piece of work is a demagogue—how villainous in conception—how deformed in all his propensities—how base

to those who know he is unfit for office—how servile to those whom he can cajole!"

Political parties succeeding the national administration which begins on the 4th of March next, may be what the young men of 1860 choose to make them. Demanding fealty to principles, and watchful vigilance against abuse of what is good principle, for narrow purposes and selfish ends, I appeal to every young man who respects the natural rights of his neighbor, and is not ashamed of the wholesome social law which makes honest occupation a necessity of trustworthy standing in the community, for cordial co-operation with the Republican party.

What are its principles?

- That the Union of the States shall be inviolate.
- That the right of each State to order and control its domestic institutions is essential to the permanency of our political fabric.
- That involuntary servitude is a cruel wrong to the servant, and is demoralizing to the master; that it is incompatible with industrial interests; opposed to the dissemination of intelligence, and promotive of vice and crime, therefore, that it ought to be directly subservient to the restrictions of the Federal Constitution.
- That the encouragement of free labor; the protection of home industry; shall be required of the Federal Government whenever and wherever that government can legitimately exercise power for such purpose.

These I take to be the principles upon which all Republicans are agreed, and which involve all the issues of the pending election. Justly discriminating tariffs, appropriate river and harbor improvements, homestead laws, Pacific railroads, economy of administration, depend upon and will grow out of their general adoption.

Opposed to these principles are all parties and all citizens who do not act for them.

No well informed man who is not the servant of party

organization, or the slave of partisan prejudice, can fail to recognize in the contest of opinions now waging, antagonisms which are as old as pride and poverty—as old as indolence and industry—involving popular endorsement or repudiation of the counsels and examples of the Fathers of the Republic; counsels and examples which would commit the National Government to the protection of educated free labor—to the support of profitable manufactures—to the interests of skilled agriculture—opening rivers and lakes for prosperous navigation—filling growing towns and opulent cities with varied sounds of industry—making all men workers and every worker a citizen; counsels and examples squarely opposed to doctrines, by violent presumption now called “Democratic,” which promise that the National Government shall promote the extension of a system which enslaves the husbandman and makes the mechanic a chattel—degrading industry—disparaging invention; a system which, in fear of itself, declares that truth shall not be free to combat error, and, to enforce this despotic law, forbids free discussion, violates the public mails, burns independent newspapers, and imprisons schoolmasters.

I do not misrepresent.

I challenge investigation, in a true spirit, of the recorded sentiments of the venerated men who knew what public opinion was in the American colonies; who directed the bold deeds which abolished English power in those colonies; who dictated the articles of confederation; who made the Federal Constitution, and who inaugurated the government under it.

I confidently refer every honest enquirer to the Cincinnati platform of the Democratic party, and its addenda adopted in either branch of that party, as it divided at Baltimore in June last, and demand whether the legitimate result of the triumph of that platform in 1860, will not be, as the result of its triumph in 1856 has been, the prostitu-

tion of the influence, authority and money of the Federal Government to open disregard and culpable neglect of intelligent industry, for the secret encouragement of those who strive to extend and perpetuate African bondage?

The essential power of the Republican party is in the fact that, in all its brief history, it has been true to the interests which demanded its organization. What were those interests? Free Labor—Free Soil—and Free Speech, and the vital privileges in which they are preserved.

Until 1848 the great parties of our nation, the Whig and Democratic, were without strife respecting the direct questions now agitating the American people; but, far-seeing Southern statesmen, by persistent, watchful opposition to the protective tariff policy of the Whigs—to the distribution of public lands to actual settlers—to river and harbor improvements (opposition embodied in Democratic platforms, and accepted by Northern politicians for peace in the party and for place in the government), prepared the way for the Compromises of 1850, for the Kansas and Nebraska Act of 1854, for the Dred Scott decision, and for the threats of disunion openly expressed in 1856, and repeated now defiantly.

Valiant and chivalric threats! Equal and exact justice will prevent their execution. The child which has learned that bugaboo in the closet is a myth for the preservation of sweetmeats, laughs the monster to scorn. It certainly will be hard for Southern politicians to surrender the pleasant places, at home and abroad, which they have almost monopolized, but even on the principle that turn about is fair play, it is not less right than hard.

Attempting to harmonize elements in irrepressible conflict, the Whig party died hopelessly. The Democratic party with dexterous management in promises on the one side, and with profitable encouragement in the distribution of offices on the other, which made it serviceable to Southern statesmen, kept its identity until the Convention at

Charleston exposed the long resisted fact, that without unqualified endorsement of Southern "Rights," involving the acknowledgment of domestic slavery, not only as a constitutional privilege, but right and expedient in itself, that party could no longer hold the votes for which it had sacrificed power in the North. It was openly avowed, indeed tempestuously proclaimed, both in the Convention at Charleston and in its successor at Baltimore, that without adherence to Southern Rights, as Southern men understood Southern Rights, the Democratic candidates could not depend upon a single Southern State; and that two tickets came out of the confusion at Baltimore, is the best illustration yet exhibited in the history of political parties, that though politicians may manage, and candidates may promise, the people elect—the people who by sad experience know that candidates upon "National" Democratic platforms, by juggling with deceitful phrases, may be expected to give ingenious illustrations of a fable the Arabs have respecting the ostrich, which they call the camel-bird.

And they said to the camel-bird, 'Carry,' and it answered, 'I cannot, I am a bird.'

And they said to the camel-bird, 'Fly,' and it answered, 'I cannot, I am a camel.'

The seceders at Charleston represented distinctly the claims which have made Southern States Democratic States—which have made Southern Representatives in Congress, and Senators from Southern States, Democratic Senators and Representatives. Their declarations of purpose were in exact harmony with declarations of purpose in Congress; with demands persistently urged in the halls of national legislation—demands contemplating the nationalization of human bondage—of African Slavery.

Congress being the direct exponent of the nation's legislative will, endorsement of or adoption by Congress of any measure or policy commits the nation. Southern men with shrewd preognition of the legitimate effects of un-

trammelled industry, have striven for Congressional endorsement of their property right in human labor under State statutes, because without that endorsement, Slavery is necessarily local, sectional, subject to disturbing causes; with that endorsement Freedom is local—Freedom is sectional. That is why the Missouri Compromise was repealed—why squatter sovereignty has had significance—why outrage and fraud were perpetrated in Kansas—why control of other Territories is struggled for with denunciations, with sophistries and with threats—why Cuba is coveted.

If the balance of political power is to be maintained for Slavery, representation for Congress, and for the Electoral College on that which is claimed to be property (making five slaves who have no votes as good as three citizens of a free State), must be extended beyond the fifteen States in which it now crushes out social and political independence.

That is why the Dred Scott decision was clung to at Charleston, and why it was not disregarded at Baltimore.

Slavery once established in a Territory, and the State which grows out of it is doomed, because political power will be vested only in slaveholders. Free discussion will be put down by mobs. Interest in the “domestic concerns of the State,” by actual ownership in slaves, will be the test of fitness for every place of influence or emolument.

What then is the pivotal issue of the November election, the issue on which all the interests at stake in it turn?

I state it deliberately, as it appears to me, not from partisan prejudice, but from convictions of the truth of history, and from my understanding of platforms.

—Whether the patronage of the Federal Government shall be employed for the enlargement of the political power of a system of servitude, necessarily antagonistic to the well-being of all who depend upon honest industry for their own support, and for the support and education of their families; or, whether the Federal Government shall

permit the natural development of principles essential to the preservation of those privileges and advantages which guarantee equal and exact justice to individuals, and enhance the true greatness of the Commonwealth—privileges, indeed, in the full freedom of which common weal is alone possible.

Standing “in the heart of an anti-slavery audience,” at Indianapolis, Indiana, Herschel V. Johnson, one of the candidates for the Vice-Presidency, appealing personally to the American people for their suffrages at the November election, said :

“I would let my tongue be palsied before I would surrender one jot or tittle of the rights of the South. We must look to it; you must begin with your constables, and go up to your chief magistracy, and plant your foot on every man’s neck who dares to say he will interfere with slavery anywhere.”

That these sentiments, these generous views of Southern rights and Northern duties, represent a majority of the votes that will be cast against the Republican platform and its candidates, the speeches of Southern Congressmen, the messages of Southern Governors, the resolutions of Southern Conventions, the acts of Southern Legislatures, the violences of Southern mobs, the melancholy history of the shattered and dissevered--once unterrified—Democratic party, sufficiently attest; and, thereby, it is made so plain, the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not mistake it, that the rugged question to be settled ultimately, between Republican principles, and the doctrines which the Slave-power forces upon the Democratic party, is not whether negroes have no rights which white men are bound to respect, but whether those whose interests are in Freedom have any rights which those whose interests are in Slavery are bound to respect; indeed, whether genuine democracy has rights which privileged aristocracy cannot with impunity and at caprice tread upon.

The day of concessions and compromises for temporary peace is past, North as well as South. Compromises have

been like the gentle breath which fans a spark into a devouring flame. Either now, by one vigorous blast, the people blow out that flame, or they permit it to be fanned into a conflagration which will consume all the national guarantees by which free labor is protected.

The triumphs of Despotism come through diplomacy. The conquests of Freedom from the expression of the popular will.

It is a great fact illustrating genuine popular sovereignty, in a comprehensive and noble sense, that the ballots of November are to be regarded as expressing the people's exposition of the Federal Constitution. Every voter should recognize in all its bearings the weight of this fact.

Does any man doubt that it is a fact?

It will not be disputed that an honest Administration will be true to the political doctrines for which the people expressed their preference when they elected its Executive.

One of the platforms before the people now is like the character the Chinese worship for the Supreme Being, without body or soul; one of the others bears just that resemblance to its confederate which the donkey, in the fable, wearing a lion's skin, did to other donkeys.

Let us take off that lion's skin and see what is under it.

John C. Breckinridge, in his letter accepting the nomination and platform made for him at Baltimore, said :

"Nothing less than sovereignty can destroy or impair the rights of persons or property. The territorial governments are subordinate and temporary, and not sovereign; hence, they cannot destroy or impair the rights of persons or property. While they continue to be Territories, they are under the control of Congress; but the Constitution nowhere confers on any branch of the Federal Government the power to discriminate against the rights of the States, or the property of their citizens in the Territories. It follows, that the citizens of all the States may enter the Territories of the Union, with their property of whatever kind, and enjoy it, during the territorial condition, without let or hindrance either by Congress or by the subordinate Territorial Governments. * * The friends of constitutional equality assert the plain duty of the Federal Govern-

ment, in all its departments, to secure, when necessary, to the citizens of all States the enjoyment of their property in the common Territories, as everywhere else within its jurisdiction."

Mr. Breckinridge's position is clear. No one need be deceived by it. No one will deny that he gives a fair exposition of the Breckinridge platform.

Stephen A. Douglas will be accepted as a fair exponent of the platform on which he was nominated.

At the city of New Orleans, Dec. 6th, 1858, he said :

"Slaves are recognized as property, and placed on an equal footing with all other property. Hence, *the owner of slaves*—the same as the owner of any other species of property—*has a right to remove to a Territory, and carry his property with him.*"

In his letter of acceptance, dated Washington, June 29, 1860, Mr. Douglas said :

"The judicial authority, as provided in the Constitution, must be sustained, and its decisions implicitly obeyed and faithfully executed."

The Supreme Court had given a decision, two points of which were :

"Every citizen has a right to take with him into the Territory any article of property which the Constitution of the United States recognizes as property.

"The Constitution of the United States *recognizes slaves as property, and pledges the Federal Government to protect it.*"

In his pamphlet reply to the review, by Attorney General Black, of the popular sovereignty article in *Harper's Magazine*, Mr. Douglas said :

"In that article, I demonstrated beyond the possibility of cavil or dispute, if slavery exists in the Territories by virtue of the Constitution, the conclusion is inevitable and irresistible that **IT IS THE IMPERATIVE DUTY OF CONGRESS TO PASS ALL LAWS NECESSARY FOR ITS PROTECTION**; that there is and can be no exception to the rule, that *a right guaranteed by the Constitution must be protected by law in all cases where legislation is essential to its enjoyment.*"

Now, then, the point of these explanations is, that according to the views of Mr. Douglas, and a fair exposition of the platform on which he is a candidate, slaves are

property under the Constitution; as such, they may be carried into any Territory of the United States, without regard to the will of the people; and when there, it is the imperative duty of Congress to pass all laws necessary for protecting the property in them.

Where is popular sovereignty, pure and simple? Taken from the people and committed to the sovereign will of the Supreme Court, which is committed against it.

What, then, is the practical distinction between the Breckinridge and the Douglas platforms? It seems to me that nobody but a willful partisan, who keeps his courage warm in the hope of an office, can find any resemblance to such a distinction.

Consider now the Republican platform and principle.

Abraham Lincoln, in his letter, accepting the nomination at Chicago, said :

"The declaration of principles and sentiments * * meets my approval, and it shall be my care not to violate or disregard it in any part."

The part to which I am inviting attention, declares the dogma that the Constitution of the United States carries slavery into the Territories, a dangerous political heresy.

What, then, is the antagonism of the platforms accepted by the gentlemen who are standard-bearers in this campaign? It lies in two propositions.

1st. That slavery may exist in the Territories by virtue of the Federal Constitution.

2d. That slavery can legitimately exist only under State laws.

There is a difference with a distinction, or a distinction with a difference, just which you please, gentlemen.

Am I not right? Have I not fortified my position, that by popular exposition of the Federal Constitution, the November election decides, on behalf of the Territories west of the Mississippi river, for or against what the Ordinance of 1787 declared for the North-West—that

slavery and involuntary servitude, except for crime, should be forever excluded therefrom; and that religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education should forever be encouraged therein.

Imagine the North-West wilderness in 1787. Contemplate the great central valley to-day. Lines of railway make a net-work over it. They connect well cultivated farms, prosperous workshops and thriving villages with great inland commercial centres. Churches, colleges, schools, lyceums, newspapers, are common necessities which the whole people enjoy.

Turn from these communities, peaceable and prosperous, and contemplate the mother State which conceded to Congress the wilderness they have redeemed. Consider her laws; look at her society; ask for her manufactories; examine her school statistics; estimate her wealth, and take notice of its sources; remember the great opportunities of her history, and her geographical position; then decide whether, so far as your ballots have influence, free States or slave States shall give stars to our national flag.

—Shall honest labor and its perennial good, its benignant services, be peaceably permitted to bless new States, or shall domestic slavery, with its vices, its wrongs, its self-propagating outrages, be extended under the fostering care of the National Government?

Disguise it as partisan prejudice, sophistry, and selfishness may, that is the question. It cannot be evaded—it will not be compromised.

These are the words I would speak, could I address all the young voters of the nation.

Think, gentlemen, for yourselves, on this question, in view of the responsibilities of your ballots. Try it by history. Try all the platforms by it: try the records of

statesmen by it; test the sincerity and consistency of politicians by it; respect the exigencies of your social positions; appreciate the political rights which you inherited, and you will not hesitate to select as your choice for President the man who is worthy, because, in his entire career, from the time when he was a hired laborer on a farm, through all the vicissitudes of self-help, in private and in public life, and in his character to-day—which partisan bitterness dares not malign—he is a fair exponent of the American idea of manhood.

An administration such as he can direct, true to the interests of the whole country, just to the West, just to the East, just to the North, just to the South, faithful to the Constitution, having no engagements which give cause for hesitating subserviency at the behests of selfish factions, is competent to destroy the occupation of sectional agitators, and give the nation peace on the vexed questions, which, like a pestiferous taint, penetrating all the deeds of James Buchanan's administration, have rendered it odious to all parties.

There is an under-current of common sense and common justice in the Southern States which those who stimulate disturbances and declaim for disunion, on account of prefigured wrongs, do not represent. That current will flow in support of an honest administration by a Northern President. Healthful tokens of it now appear in Virginia, in Kentucky, in Maryland, and in Missouri.

With that current openly flowing for Freedom into the great tide which must set with a Republican President and Cabinet, there will be wonderful transformations of opinion respecting the propriety of “niggerism,” “sectionalism,” and other ugly names for Republicanism. There will also be such revolutions in local politics, such wholesale consigning of “aspiring patriots” to political Coventry as was never witnessed, except during the brief period “mysterious Sam” was a power at the polls.

The man, now attaining his majority, seeking a fair start in political life, who does not cast his ballot for Freedom, will have the melancholy satisfaction of an unpopular error, for which he can plead neither good purpose nor good company.

No man should join any movement simply because he thinks that movement will triumph. I ask young men to be Republicans in 1860, because, in view of their own interests, and the highest interests of all who are dear to them, it is right; yet it is not inappropriate to bid them take heed of the signs which give fair promise that the right will prevail. All of our Northern States will follow the hopeful example of Pennsylvania, Indiana and Ohio, if our young men are not misled.

That they spurn the influences which are employed to mislead them, Wide Awake organizations in all parts of the North in wholesome, energetic service, afford trustworthy assurance. To those whom my words reach, I would bear testimony that no element in this campaign is more significant. Your responsibility is as wide-spread and far-reaching as your organization is wide awake. Remember, I intreat you, that national polities become what local polities represent and encourage. Respecting character in your political, as you respect it in your social circle, relying on honest work for polities as you do for permanent success in business, your history will not be measured by the campaign of 1860.

I appeal to each one for faithful observance of the searching law which requires personal respect in whatever violence of political animosities as it does in whatever temptations of society or of business.

A significant illustration of the value of the American idea of government is offered in the fact, that among no other people as among the people of the United States, do young men control opinions and direct business. In our workshops, in our counting-houses, in our court-houses, in

halls of learning and in halls of legislation, young men are leaders. They hold to-day the destiny of the nation. Following the examples and obeying the counsels of Hamilton, and Madison, and Monroe, and other political leaders, who were young men when the Federal Constitution was adopted, having swept

"the prairies
As of old our Fathers swept the sea,
And made the West, as they the East,
The homestead of the Free,"

securing the peaceful triumphs which make Freedom national, they will be required so to administer State and National Governments, that morals and education, agriculture and manufactures, commerce, literature and the arts, may, in the widest degree and in the most beneficent manner, enlighten the people and beautify and enrich the land they inherit.

Let no one be indifferent to the responsibilities which open before him—let no one be ignorant of the political history of our country—let all read with thoughtful attention what political parties have been, and consider shrewdly what political parties ought to be.

The encouragement of the noblest statesmen of the past is yours; the fellowship and sympathy of those who worship the highest standards of morality, are with you. Then keep your armor on, let every lamp be well filled and well trimmed, let every foot be ready for accordant step, at the Commandant's order, until the principles, for which you marched to night, are so well settled in national policy that neither the reckless outcry of sectional distrust, nor the ingenious misrepresentations of disappointed ambition can disturb them.

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